

# Pacific Pathways 2014: Operational Art in Practice

A Monograph

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## Abstract

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This study uses Pacific Pathways 2014 as a method to describe operational art as it exists in the real world. Though focused on events that transpired in the Pacific theater, the lessons provided in this work are relevant to any planner seeking to understand how operational art actually works. The environment military planners operate in is inherently complex. Planners use operational art to gather a rich understanding of the environment and the strategic guidance provided by national and military leaders. Operational art links this broad and conceptual strategic guidance to tangible tactical action. Masterful employment of operational art provides cognitive space for subordinate organizations to think, act, and adapt.

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## Acronyms

ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
CTG	Command Training Guidance
FORSCOM	United States Army Forces Command
JOE	Joint Operating Environment
JP	Joint Publication
OPTEMPO	Operational Tempo
RAF	Regionally Aligned Forces
SBCT	Stryker Brigade Combat Team
TC	Training Circular
USPACOM	United States Pacific Command

## Introduction

2013 represents a decisive transition for the United States Army and the joint force. From 2001 to 2012, the United States focused efforts in the Middle East to support the Global War on Terror. The Pentagon stacked means against threats in the Middle East, assuming risk in other theaters around the world. During this period, the force enjoyed relatively unconstrained resources and few distractions from preparing for and going to war. But every good war must end, and an end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan was accompanied by an end to unlimited resources.

Nevertheless, conflict resolution and fiscal constraints would not lead to a lull in military activity. Rather, 2013 also became a period of intense transition back to the Army's core competencies of combined arms maneuver and wide area security.<sup>1</sup> Though the military was well versed in *irregular warfare*, senior leaders perceived a significant gap in the force's capacity to conduct action against a near-peer competitor. In 2013, the Army prioritized training to prepare for *Unified Land Operations*, focusing on combined-arms maneuver.

Finally, 2013 included a transition towards perpetual global operations, where forces would be required to set conditions prior to conflict. The Army announced *regional alignment*, an initiative designed to provide trained and ready forces to combatant commanders. At the same time, United States Pacific Command and United States Army Pacific took major steps to support the nation's Pivot to the Pacific. Announced by President Obama in 2012, the Pivot to the Pacific represented a decisive and strategic effort to employ the elements of national power outside of Central Command thereby increasing US influence, control, and economic freedom of action.

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<sup>1</sup> The Army's core competencies are combined arms maneuver and wide area security. In combined arms maneuver, forces focus on decisive and offensive. In wide area security, forces focus efforts on the population to prevent an adversary from controlling the population. Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), iii.

## Research Question and Scope

This research focuses on the application of operational art in conjunction with the Pivot to the Pacific, a seemingly bland initiative that would prove decisive in defining the Army's new role outside of major conflict. This research provides an example of planning in the real world, an environment categorized by bureaucratic friction and complexity. The primary research question is how the United States Army employed operational art to support the Pivot to the Pacific. The secondary research question is what gaps exist between strategic concepts and tactical execution.

In isolation, the Army's definition of operational art depicts a straightforward process conducted in a sterile environment, where planning focuses on "...the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose."<sup>2</sup> In practice, such clean conditions can never be replicated. Operational planning teams leverage limited information in a time and resource constrained environment, making their best effort to distill uncertainty into executable tactical actions. This research provides a tangible example of contemporary operating art. Conclusions derived from the intended and unintended consequences of Pacific Pathways 2014 are relevant to any planner, at any echelon, facing an ill-defined and ambiguous obstacle with little guidance from a higher headquarters.

## Methodology

This research analyzes the strategic environment through the lens of general systems and complexity theory, the tactical actions chosen to pursue strategic objectives, and most importantly the gaps between strategy and tactical action. The first section is a literature review to expand understanding of key military planning frameworks and their employment in the contemporary operating environment. Doctrinal definitions are provided along with a distillation of associated

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<sup>2</sup> ADRP 3-0, 4-1.

military theory and history. Key concepts include national and military strategy as well as operational art and its evolution as a cognitive planning framework.

Next is a process trace case study of the United States Army's support to the Pivot to the Pacific. Broadly, *process tracing* is an in-depth analysis of a system focusing on initial case conditions, relationships between variables, and case outcomes.<sup>3</sup> Process tracing enables theory development, expanded appreciation for variables, and allows for detailed exploration of formative relationships.<sup>456</sup> The case study begins by defining the Pacific theater in 2014 through the lens of American policy and postulating the future operating environment. The study then transitions to the strategic context given the guidance contained in both national and military strategy. Subsequently, the study describes the use of operational art and the intent for employment of tactical forces in the form of Pacific Pathways 2014. Finally, the study provides detailed information regarding the employment of tactical forces in Pacific Pathways and proximate results of these actions.

The final section of this research serves as a conclusion, highlighting the gaps between intent, as defined in strategic guidance, and execution, as demonstrated in Pacific Pathways 2014. This research is about the Pivot to the Pacific, but the implications are relevant to planners on any military staff. To sort through the fog and friction of a complex environment, Army planners employ operational art to discern the most relevant facets. Operational art fosters shared understanding between headquarters, setting conditions for emergent principles that align tactical action and strategic aim.

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, 5th ed. (Baltimore: Cornell University Press, 1997), 64.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander L. George, Andrew Bennett, and L. George, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 209.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

## Literature Review

### Strategy

Before analyzing the United States' strategic Pivot to the Pacific, military planners must first clearly understand both national and military strategy. The word strategy itself is often surrounded by significant confusion, consternation, and debate amongst planners. From the traceable origin of the word in Ancient Greece, the word strategy has often been associated with military action and activities. Contemporary usage varies in scope from *sales strategy* at a local shoe store to *The United Nations Development Strategy Beyond 2015*. Understanding requires more specificity. Rather than propose finite definitions of the terms, this section describes what strategy is, what strategy is not, and provides cognitive delineation between national strategy and military strategy. Additionally, this section provides context regarding the headquarters and organizations developing strategic concepts that affected the Army's operations in the Pacific.

Webster's Dictionary defines strategy as "a careful plan or method for achieving a particular goal usually over a long period of time."<sup>7</sup> This simple and straightforward definition introduces several key components including a plan or method, a goal, and time. These components are present in a variety of definitions associated with political and military strategy. Gray defines strategy as "the direction and use made of means by chosen way in order to achieve desired ends."<sup>8</sup> His description substitutes the word *goal* for *ends* as a unifying component of strategy. Freedman provides another approach, describing strategy as "being about maintaining a balance between ends, ways, and means..."<sup>9</sup> Though these definitions vary in nuance; they possess applicable commonality, reinforcing previously provided key components.

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<sup>7</sup> Merriam-Webster "Definition of Strategy," Merriam-Webster, accessed September 27, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/strategy>.

<sup>8</sup> Colin S Gray, *Perspectives on Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Sir Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), xi.

Strategy contains three essential components. The first is ways, or methods employed to achieve a goal. The next common component is means, tools, or assets available for employment when considering various ways. Lastly, strategy must possess ends, or unifying actions tied to strategy over time. Strategists use creativity to balance these components, always seeking relative advantage over time. The United States Military defines strategy as "a prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives."<sup>10</sup>

However, these components do not exist in isolation. In any environment, numerous strategies compete for success over time. Angstrom describes an environment where competing strategies seek to "influence one's counterpart in a direction that favors one's interests."<sup>11</sup> Given this competition for influence, strategy can be viewed as adversarial interaction where competitors seek relative control and success.<sup>12</sup> In complexity theory, this interaction is defined as a *co-evolutionary process*, an environment where strategy and action are influenced by the strategy and action of other actors. To be effective, strategies must evolve. In the context of the Pacific, United States' strategy exists in a competitive environment along with the strategies of Australia, China, Thailand, The Islamic State, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and countless other actors. Over time, multiple allies and opponents employ available means in ways they view as appropriate to effectively progress towards established ends.

Given these basic components, it is now important to understand what strategy is not. Given previously described competition, it is simply impossible to predict an end state and follow steps to get there. Friction and competing strategies do not allow for simplistic end states and clear-cut

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<sup>10</sup> Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 231.

<sup>11</sup> Jan Angstrom and Jerker J. Widen, *The Dynamics of War: Contemporary Military Theory* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2014), 46.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Axelrod and Michael D. Cohen, *Harnessing Complexity: Organizational Implications of a Scientific Frontier* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 8.

paths to success. Rather than seeking termination, effective strategies seek to attain continuation or continued existence in a position of advantage relative to adversaries.<sup>13</sup> In this turbulent environment, strategists seek to maintain options leading towards continued favorable conditions.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, strategy is not static. Strategies are relative to the organizations employing them and interrelated actions in an environment. To maintain favorable conditions, nations must employ flexible strategies, constantly assess the environment, and adjust application when appropriate. Like human beings, strategy must adapt to fit the environment or become irrelevant.<sup>15</sup> In the contemporary environment, war is not a binary relationship between disagreeing nations. Conflict has evolved as a continuum of actions where numerous competitors seek relative advantage. State and non-state actors function according to their strategies, seeking to influence others over time through fear, coercion, partnership, and a range of other actions. Competitors must consider relative power, resources, proximity, culture, and countless other variables.

Yet this discussion of strategy does not easily translate to application in a political and military context. There remain divides between inception, synchronization, and transition to action. Clausewitz addressed this delineation by describing strategic actions during war as well as those preparing for war.<sup>16</sup> In the United States, this delineation evolved into two interdependent facets, national and military strategy. National strategy focuses on interests and conflict, while military strategy focuses on preparing the means, military units, for conflict.

According to Dolman, national strategy "is the process by which all means available to the state are considered in pursuit of a continuing political influence."<sup>17</sup> The inclusion of "all means"

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<sup>13</sup> Everett Carl C. Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (London: Frank Cass, 2007), 9.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>15</sup> Colin S Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 36.

<sup>16</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 127.

<sup>17</sup> Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 26.

alludes to synchronization of the elements of national power. In the United States, the means include diplomatic, information, military, and economic action. This national strategy aims to shape or prevent conflict, to "target an adversary's will to start or continue a fight," with the intention of retaining a favorable position with options.<sup>18</sup> Military strategy is "about how politics is turned into military tasks and targets."<sup>19</sup>

However, national strategy requires further refinement prior to becoming military action. Where national strategy provides ends to synchronize employment of the elements of national power, military strategy synchronizes all military means around the same national aims. Where policy is the derivative of national strategy, military strategy is an extension of policy by military means. Though unique in execution, military strategy is incomplete if not synchronized with other element of national power. Therefore, it is essential that military strategy derives from and is subordinate to national strategy. In this context, the Department of Defense creates military strategy providing priorities in the form of varied defense strategic guidance. The Geographic Combatant Command headquarters refines and connects this strategy to ways and means. The output reflects a compromise between the ends established in national strategy and the military means available for implementation.<sup>20</sup>

Returning to Clausewitz's discussion of strategy, military strategy includes the act of war as well as preparing the military for war. In this context, the Department of Defense provides broad context for preparation, relying on subordinate components to prepare the force for future threats. The Joint Operating Environment and the Army's Operating Concept serve as unifying documents, providing a common vision regarding the future of warfare. United States Army Forces Command

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<sup>18</sup> Sir Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy*, 194.

<sup>19</sup> Angstrom and Widen, *The Dynamics of War*, 36.

<sup>20</sup> Hew Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* Vol.47, no. 3 (2005): 33-54.

provides the last component of military strategy, unifying means in the form of forces available, and increasing capacity towards this established common vision.

## The Evolution of Operational Art

Operational art is a cognitive framework where strategic concepts link to tangible and executable action in the form of campaigns of operations. Though elements of operational art are present throughout the recorded history of armed conflict, it developed most rapidly in the nineteenth century in conjunction with technological advances in weaponry, transportation, and communications. Most importantly, national revolutions occurring during this period introduced expanding nationalism at the individual level. Prior to these advances, successful armies executed operations within the physical control of a battlefield commander. An excellent example lies in the operating construct of the Prussian Army in the late eighteenth century. This dominant force, under the command of Fredrick the Great, viewed battle as a chess match between opposing commanders.<sup>21</sup> In an environment where the preponderance of soldiers were well-trained but generally unmotivated, the ultimate object of battle was forcing an enemy to move and therefore abandon his position. Pay, rather than purpose, motivated soldiers, and they could not be trusted to advance or follow orders without maximum supervision.<sup>22</sup> Given this theme of mistrust, Prussian battle revolved around the order of a single leader, leaving no room for subordinate creativity or initiative.

Advances in technology and unification through national revolutions shattered the Prussian style of warfare, starting with the French Revolution. The unity of government and people following the French revolution can be described as "...fanaticism and missionary zeal... [where] the wealth, manpower, and intelligence of France were hurled against Europe with an effectiveness

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<sup>21</sup> Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert, *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 99.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

that for a time was irresistible."<sup>23</sup> Under Napoleon as unified head of state, the French Army decimated adversaries and nearly conquered the European continent. This passion on the battlefield was observed firsthand by Carl Von Clausewitz, who later wrote that "...all limits disappeared in the vigor and enthusiasm shown by governments and their subjects."<sup>24</sup> As opposed to closely controlled and centralized battles, improvements to the range and accuracy of weapons punished nineteenth century commanders for concentrating troops.<sup>25</sup> Whereas Frederick the Great centralized control of his Army, Napoleonic forces rapidly dispersed beyond the physical influence of their commander. In this environment, Napoleon struck a delicate balance between dispersion during movement and retaining the ability to concentrate a numerically superior force against an isolated enemy.<sup>26</sup> Napoleon's tactics were reliant on the capabilities of subordinate commanders to meet his intent while geographically separated and on the soldiers of the French army to rally around the cause while performing in the toughest of situations. Operational art, as exemplified by Napoleon Bonaparte's dominant actions, revolved around linking tactical actions into a series unified by common purpose.<sup>27</sup>

Though a dominant military leader, Napoleon was not challenged by varied opinions and guidance provided at the strategic level. By serving as both head of state and army, Napoleon always synchronized actions in the field with the strategic aim.<sup>28</sup> In contrast, a fitting example of this tension is Helmuth von Moltke, Chief of Staff of the Prussian Army, and his relationship with Otto von Bismarck, the Prussian chancellor and Moltke's political counterpart. In an attempt to

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>24</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 593.

<sup>25</sup> James J. Schneider, "Vulcan's Anvil: The American Civil War and the Foundation of the Operational Art," Theoretical Paper No. 4. Fort Leavenworth KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2004: 4.

<sup>26</sup> David G. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (New York: Scribner, 1966), 151.

<sup>27</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 182.

<sup>28</sup> Craig and Gilbert, *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, 129.

evade international intervention at the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian War, Bismarck advocated an adjustment to military objectives, transitioning focus from destruction of forces to the siege of Paris.<sup>29</sup> Moltke objected strongly, but in the end was required to remain focused on the strategic aim and objectives as defined by his political counterpart. This vignette describes the primary tension the operational artist addresses, ensuring tactical missions remain linked to evolving objectives throughout the duration of a campaign.<sup>30</sup>

### Operational Art Today

Following World War II, operational art evolved beyond the battlefield in the context of deterrence and initiation of the Cold War. During this period, the balanced threat of destruction through nuclear means limited conventional conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. To gain a position of relative advantage, these world powers employed alternate forms of coercion to include economic sanctions and aid, treaties and alliances, and proxy wars.<sup>31</sup> The United States centered on the ideology of democracy and developed a worldwide network of fledgling democratic states, purposefully distributed to prevent communist expansion. The United States increased efforts to increase the proficiency of foreign militaries and expanded overseas arms sales significantly.<sup>32</sup> In this context, the spectrum of military action expanded in both time and purpose. Whereas the primary purpose of Napoleon's force revolved around decisive action on the battlefield, the Cold War broadened the spectrum of conflict.

Today, the United States Military's phasing construct provides a lens to view operational problems, expressing a continuum of action always centered on maintaining a position of relative

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<sup>29</sup> Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 292.

<sup>30</sup> Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 1997), 7.

<sup>31</sup> George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 651.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 653.

advantage. This six phase phases of the operational construct are shape (phase 0), deter (phase I), seize initiative (phase II), dominate (phase III), stabilize (phase IV), and enable civil control (phase V).<sup>33</sup> Today, the United States provides a persistent military presence in phase 0, setting favorable conditions in the operational environment through military to military engagements and diverse operational experience. In theory, favorable conditions today will decrease the likelihood of unfavorable conditions in the future. This concept is the premise for *regional alignment*, a key facet of the Pivot to the Pacific.

The United States Army defines operational art as "...the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose."<sup>34</sup> To understand the context of the strategic objectives, military planners consider the political environment and worldview, policy, and most importantly, the strategic aim or goal associated with the military action. Planning teams then analyze the stated strategic objectives as well as the military objectives presented by strategic leaders. Since objectives may vary or conflict, successful employment of operational art focuses on the strategic aim. Given this purpose, the operational artist produces numerous options for the distribution and utilization of resources in time and space. Each option exploits opportunities; each opportunity conversely leads to risk in another action or domain. Operational art is an iterative process balancing the cognitive tension between strategic direction and tactical action.<sup>35</sup>

## Summary

This section synthesized history and theory to provide an enhanced understanding of national strategy, military strategy, and the application of operational art. Military planners seek strategic guidance in a variety of documents, transcripts, and speeches. In a perpetual state of

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<sup>33</sup> Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), III-42.

<sup>34</sup> ADRP 3-0, 4-1.

<sup>35</sup> Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence*, 9.

limited resources, to include, time, people, and money, planners employ operational art to distill complexity into executable action, all while maintaining focus on shifting strategic objectives and end state. The remainder of this study builds on this understanding by demonstrating operational art in contemporary use.

## Case Study: Pacific Pathways 2014

### The Future Operating Environment

The first section of this case study provides a vision for the future operating environment in the Pacific. Applicable characteristics of this environment include increased influence of non-state actors, aggressive realignment regional power, and competitive redistribution of world power. This description is based on the relevant documents as the Army developed plans supporting the Pivot to the Pacific in 2013. A thorough vision of the future is essential to operational art, supplementing understanding of the strategic context. Additionally, common understanding of the future operating environment gives unifying context, enabling the employment of mission command. Shared understanding enables disciplined initiative by subordinate commanders and their organizations.<sup>36</sup>

To create this shared vision and understanding, the United States Military uses theoretical documents such as *The Joint Operating Environment* and *The Army Operating Concept* to formally describe the future operating environment. The Joint Operating Environment serves as the military's central and unifying guide to advancement, contributing to "...the concept development and experimentation that will, in turn, drive our evolutionary adaption..."<sup>37</sup> This foundational document provides context for components to experiment, adapt, and evolve force capabilities under a common vision. The Army's Operating Concept is subordinate to the parameters established in this joint doctrine. Published in 2014, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept, Win in a*

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<sup>36</sup> Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 2-1.

<sup>37</sup> *The Joint Operating Environment 2010 (JOE 2010) - Ready for Today, Preparing for Tomorrow* (Suffolk, Virginia: Government Printing Office, 2010), 4.

*Complex World (2020 -2040)* serves as a unifying construct as the Army adapts. In its introduction, General David Perkins describes the document as a “...start point for developing the future force...” where the “...tenet of innovation challenges us to anticipate changing conditions to ensure that Army forces are manned, trained, and equipped to overmatch enemies in order to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative.”<sup>38</sup> In order to win in the future, forces would be required to provide multiple options to commanders, present multiple dilemmas to adversaries, influence multiple domains, and engage with multiple partners.<sup>39</sup> Joseph Nye describes military power in the context of four modalities: destruction, coercion, assured protection, and assistance. Smart military power is the application of all modalities, representing both hard and soft power, to achieve an effect in concert with other elements of combat power.<sup>40</sup> Success in the future of the Pacific region will require agile forces that effectively employ power in complex and ambiguous situations. Analysis of the future environment provides insight as to the role Army forces may fill, providing context to plan today's employment. Returning to the operational phasing construct, actions in phase 0 should be designed to decrease unfavorable conditions in the future. In a complex environment, the relationships between variables and conditions are not always evident. Military planners employ operational art to as a lens to interpret ambiguity, synthesizing relevant and advantageous actions to shape the nature of the future operating environment.

The first characteristic of the operational environment is the increased influence of non-state actors. This characteristic can be attributed to increased diversity and cultural interaction given reduced proximity in physical and cognitive space. Reduction in physical space can be attributed to exponential global population growth given expanded access to medicine, food, and clean water.

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<sup>38</sup> *The U.S. Army Operating Concept - Win in a Complex World 2020-2040* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), iv.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, iv.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 41-49.

By 2035, the global population will approach 9 billion people.<sup>41</sup> As populations grow, individuals competing for resources often migrate towards large population centers. An environment of migration and competition given scarce resources sets conditions for tension as actors, systems, and beliefs collide. By the year 2030, sixty percent of the world's population will reside in urban areas.<sup>42</sup> In addition, cognitive space between ideologies is rapidly diminishing given global connectivity through social media. In an environment where individuals link through peer-to-peer and group engagements, the ability for non-state actors to gain influence increases vastly over time.<sup>43</sup> Recent successful ISIL actions in Malaysia demonstrate the power of a non-state actor while leveraging information to distribute their ideology and impact regional stability through terrorism.<sup>44</sup> Any force attempting to impose order in this environment will require superb skill in urban operations and significant training in human interaction.

In an environment defined by decreased physical and cognitive space, state control will likely erode given alternative power structures presented by non-state actors.<sup>45</sup> *The Joint Operating Environment* describes this phenomenon as a shift towards *alternative hubs of authority*, where "... the distribution of power will continue to transition away from a state-centric world towards a multi-level, multi-nodal model..."<sup>46</sup> As humans pursue resources in cities, the inevitable mix of cultures, religions, and ideas will magnify hatred and violence. In this environment, non-state actors will exploit scant resources, fear, and ideology to increase influence. These organizations will likely thrive in ungoverned spaces, holding no regard for recognized borders. Examples of ungoverned

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<sup>41</sup> *The Joint Operating Environment 2035 (JOE 2035) – The Joint Force in a Contested and Disordered World* (Suffolk, Virginia: Government Printing Office, 2016), 10.

<sup>42</sup> *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, 12.

<sup>43</sup> Joseph S. Nye, 2011, 108.

<sup>44</sup> Marc Lourdes, "Islamic State Launches First Successful Attack in Malaysia," CNN, July 4, 2016, accessed December 8, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/04/homepage2/islamic-state-attack-malaysia/>.

<sup>45</sup> *JOE 2035*, 10.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

spaces include jungles, mountainous border regions, and mega-cities. Transnational terrorist and criminal organizations will challenge the sovereignty of affected Pacific nations, the current regional order, and likely the United States as demonstrated by the actions of Jemaah Islamiyah.<sup>47</sup>

Jemaah Islamiyah, an al-Qaeda affiliate, initially flourished in Indonesia given ineffective state structures and a population boom in urban centers. In the 1990s, Al-Qaeda initiated a deliberate strategy to expand their influence in the Pacific. The strategy consisted of establishing local extremist cells, the creation of an indigenous regional network, and finally coordination between actors to increase effective employment.<sup>48</sup> The archipelago of Indonesia provided an excellent location for strategic employment of extremism. The population of Indonesia increased rapidly in the twentieth century, particularly in population centers. As an example, the capital city of Jakarta expanded from 2 million residents in 1948 to over 8 million in 1990.<sup>49</sup> This expansion outpaced available government resources which simply could not provide for the people. Only 87% of the population of Indonesia has access to clean and improved sources of drinking water.<sup>50</sup> Resenting globalization and urbanization, Jemaah Islamiyah rose as an alternative power structure. The organization sought to establish a regional caliphate, filling the void in state control with extreme religious rule.<sup>51</sup> Jemaah Islamiyah initiated a campaign targeting western influence in Indonesia, claiming responsibility for attacks in Bali and Jakarta. Jemaah Islamiyah is one of countless non-state actors that will challenge traditional sources of power in the future operating environment.

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<sup>47</sup> Tara John, "Indonesia's Long Battle with Islamic Extremism," *Time*, January 14, 2016, accessed December 8, 2016, <http://time.com/4181557/jakarta-terrorist-attacks-indonesia-isis/>.

<sup>48</sup> Bruce Vaughn et al. "Terrorism in Southeast Asia" Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, Accessed 6 December, 2016. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RL31672.pdf>, 3.

<sup>49</sup> "The Jakarta Metropolitan Area," *United Nations University*, accessed December 8, 2016, <http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu11ee/uu11ee15.htm>.

<sup>50</sup> "The Central Intelligence Agency World Fact Book - Indonesia," *Central Intelligence Agency*, accessed December 8, 2016, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/id.html>.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

In an environment categorized by reduced state control, military forces will require a diverse skillset to gain and maintain a position of relative advantage. Future Army forces will likely be tasked to expand the professionalism of a host-nation force, providing weapons training in conjunction with Foreign Military Sales.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, the Army must prepare to provide peace enforcement at the request of a host-nation.<sup>53</sup> In this example, the United States Military may augment host-nation security forces at the request of their government. Conditions for this employment range from disaster relief to riots surrounding an unpopular election. Lastly, future Army forces may be called to unilaterally influence a non-state actor threatening US or allied interests. Given operations in ungoverned spaces, future Army forces must be prepared to operate in diverse environments with emphasis on dense population centers.<sup>54</sup>

The next characteristic of the future operating environment, redistribution of regional power, implies significant challenges to current treaties, partnerships, and alliances. Though there are countless factors contributing to this redistribution of power, those most pertinent in the Pacific are state fragility and emergent geographic value. In the instance of a fragile or failing state, the environment is conducive for non-state actors to flourish, further contributing to national and regional instability.<sup>55</sup> As a state's internal control diminishes, neighboring states become more likely to intervene on behalf of stability. These actions, agreements, and conflicts between neighboring states influence regional and global institutions.<sup>56</sup> In other instances, shifts in regional power will involve emergent resources, requirements, and technology. Previously unimportant geographic features and areas may emerge as key terrain. Regardless of the cause, emerging power

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<sup>52</sup> Colin S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare* (London: Cassell Reference, 2007), 382.

<sup>53</sup> *JOE 2035*, 50.

<sup>54</sup> *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, 12.

<sup>55</sup> *JOE 2035*, 37.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

will exploit opportunities to gain regional influence. In some instances, adversaries will exploit these transitions as an opportunity to diminish the United States' freedom of action in a region.

In an area categorized by shifting alignment, the United States will rely on broad regional access to ensure stability, freedom of action, and relevance. As relationships shift, the United States will rely on relations, both existing and emerging, to counterbalance adversary actions. As synchronized by United States Pacific Command, today's military gains access as a method to *set the theater* in the Pacific. Quantified in the Army Operating Concept, *setting the theater* "includes actions to establish and maintain the conditions necessary to retain joint force freedom of action."<sup>57</sup> Setting the theater includes locations of pre-positioned stock, troops, and capabilities. It also includes the requisite subject matter expertise to act in numerous countries throughout the region with knowledge of ports, airfields, facilities, and regulations.

The Philippines recent shift away from the United States provides a contemporary example of regional realignment in the Pacific. The United States and the Philippines have enjoyed a long and mutually beneficial relationship originating in 19th century colonialism.<sup>58</sup> For the United States, the Philippines represents immense geo-strategic value given its regional centrality in the context of the South China Sea. Subsequently, the United States has invested significant resources in the country's development and stability. Agreements include the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty, the 1991 Visiting Force Agreement, and the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. The Philippines served as a focal point in the United States' Pivot to the Pacific; in 2014 bilateral trade between the nations exceeded 14 billion dollars. The United States plays an active role in the Philippines' defensive posture, leading numerous training exercises to include Balikatan and the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training. Balikatan, a significant bilateral joint exercise first held in 1991, focuses

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<sup>57</sup> *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, 23.

<sup>58</sup> Thomas Lum and Ben Dolven, "The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests – 2014" Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, Accessed 6 December, 2016. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43498.pdf>, 1.

on the Philippines capability to defend its sovereignty and territory.<sup>59</sup> The Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training exercise focuses on projecting military power through naval operations to include maritime interdictions operations and ship boarding.<sup>60</sup> Lastly, the United States actively participates in counterinsurgency operations through the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines. Since 2002, the United States has provided approximately 500 personnel to assist in counterinsurgency operations in Mindanao and Jolo.<sup>61</sup>

This relationship began to show signs of wear in the 1990s as China increased efforts to control disputed territorial waters. Control of the South China Sea, also known as the West Philippine Sea, is a major point of contention between China, the United States, Thailand, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan, Indonesia, and Brunei. The sea represents emergent value in the form of recently discovered natural resources and constrains China's sea lines of communication.<sup>62</sup> China's geo-strategy in the region shifted in 1990 as demonstrated by occupation of the Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands, territory previously controlled by the Philippines.<sup>63</sup> A lack of US response to perceived Chinese aggression undoubtedly frustrated the Filipino government, as expressed after the 2016 election of President Rodrigo Duterte. In October of 2016, President Duterte vowed to depart established relationships with the United States, fostering ties with China. Though his administration attempted to downplay the sincerity of these comments, they represent a fundamental shift in regional influence. The United States must effectively manage its relationship with the Philippines to retain relative influence in the region. As a significant portion of this relationship is based on military partnership, planners must understand this sensitive context and incorporate key concepts into planned regional engagements.

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<sup>59</sup> Thomas Lum and Ben Dolven, "The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests – 2014," 13.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 16.

The last critical component of the future operating environment in the Pacific is the competitive reallocation of world power. Though the United States and other western powers have come to appreciate the benefits of globalization, other nations will challenge the existing world order in an attempt to gain relevant advantage. Potential competitors in the Pacific area of responsibility include Australia, India, China, and Japan. Planners must understand the current and emerging powers in the region and integrate this context into operational plans.

Following the Cold War, the United States emerged as an unrivaled, uni-polar world power. From a neo-liberal perspective, the United States capitalized on existing international structures, such as the North Atlantic Trade Organization and the United Nations, as a vehicle to increase stability through the employment of democratic peace theory.<sup>64</sup> Democracy, coupled with technology, led to rapid globalization in the late 21st century. In essence, the United States controls the structures the world relies on for global governance.<sup>65</sup> This control is maintained by the principle of collective security, where collective global interests are maintained by allied states.<sup>66</sup> To America and its allies, globalization is viewed as a vehicle for free trade, economic prosperity, and stability through increased interactions. From an adversarial perspective, globalization embodies repression and exploitation of weaker powers.<sup>67</sup> To these adversaries, globalization represents erosion of sovereignty to structures centered on continued American control.<sup>68</sup>

In the future operating environment, less powerful nations will attempt to change the rules that support the status quo. Competing nations will increase the importance of regional influence as an alternative to existing global structures. Partner nations will be forced to choose between

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<sup>64</sup> Chris Brown and Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 46; Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare*, 350.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>67</sup> Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, 78.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 81.

existing structures and those imposed by a powerful neighbor.<sup>69</sup> Examples include exclusive regional trade agreements or controlled access to global key terrain. Additionally, adversaries will expand military capacity to support global influence. Examples include expansion of sea and air power to enable operational mobility. Military expansion will likely include investment in vulnerable domains such as space and cyber.<sup>70</sup> In this environment, the military must continue to assure partners and allies, but must also be prepared to fight and win against a peer or near-peer. Given likely challenges to global commons, Army forces must be prepared to seize or defend key terrain.<sup>71</sup> To be successful across thoroughly contested domains, the force must maximize the capability of joint integration in the form of multi-domain battle.<sup>72</sup>

A clear example of a rising world power in the Pacific is China. Though the United States and China share numerous shared interests, there is significant potential for conflict given mistrust and contrasting views on key issues. The most prominent shared interest between the nations is their interdependent economies, the two largest in the world. The United States is China's top trading partner while China is the United States' second largest.<sup>73</sup> This linkage, in isolation, would lead both nations on a path of cooperation and stability. To encourage a relationship established by economic ties, the United States and China participate in numerous bilateral dialogues and engagements. The largest of these engagements is the Strategic and Economic Dialogue, a forum introduced to reduce confusion and misunderstanding between the two powers.<sup>74</sup> Other productive engagements include dialogues on North Korea, the environment, and response to regional national

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<sup>69</sup> *JOE 2035*, 6.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>72</sup> *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, 23.

<sup>73</sup> Susan V. Lawrence, "U.S.-China Relations: An Overview of Policy Issues - August 1, 2013" Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, Accessed 6 December, 2016. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41108.pdf>, 32.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

disasters.<sup>75</sup> Military-to-military engagements between the two nations have increased significantly in recent years. Positive cooperative steps include China sending military observers to Balikatan in the Philippines in 2013 and participating in Rim of the Pacific, the United States' largest multi-national naval exercise, in 2014.<sup>76</sup> In this tenuous relationship, military planners must seek opportunities for convergence whenever common interests emerge.

However, not all interactions between the two powers are positive and productive. Multiple disputes between China and the United States foster extensive mistrust and preclude political cooperation towards peaceful coexistence. Examples include United States' involvement in the South China Sea as previously discussed, its' relationship with Taiwan, and China's record of human rights' abuses. Following a Chinese civil war in 1949, the retreating ruling party, the Kuomintang, established themselves as an independent nation in Taiwan. Maintaining unification with the Kuomintang remains a preeminent Chinese policy objective, and China retains a position of sovereignty over the island. The dispute over Taiwan has evolved in part due to inconsistency between the United States' position and actions. To increase diplomatic communication with China, the United States recognized Chinese sovereignty and later agreed to discontinue any official relationship with Taiwan.<sup>77</sup> However, the United States' "unofficial" relationship with Taiwan has included significant military-to-military coordination including arms sales. Undoubtedly, China views these actions as counter-productive, counter-intuitive, and provocative.<sup>78</sup>

Though the United States and China share many interests, the Chinese military is rapidly modernizing their force with emphasis on exploiting emergent technology and countering US dominance. Chinese capabilities emphasize counter-intervention, described by the United States

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<sup>75</sup> Susan V. Lawrence, "U.S.-China Relations: An Overview of Policy Issues - August 1, 2013," 25.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 15; Shannon Tiezzi, "A 'historic moment': China's Ships Head to RIMPAC 2014," June 11, 2014, accessed December 15, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/06/a-historic-moment-chinas-ships-head-to-rimpac-2014/>.

<sup>77</sup> Lawrence, *U.S.-China Relations: An Overview of Policy Issues August 1, 2013*, 28.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 31.

Military as anti-access/area-denial. Examples of emergent capabilities include the anti-ship ballistic missiles such as the DF-21D "carrier killer."<sup>79</sup> Though the United States possesses a significant advantage in the form of sea power, this weapon would degrade relative advantage if employed to prevent access to global commons, key terrain, or a contested area. Another example include J-20 stealth fighter prototype, designed to counter United States regional air defense capability.<sup>80</sup> Finally, China is investing in cyber and network exploitation capabilities to counter perceived US weaknesses. The Department of Defense has accused China of using these assets to collect information and proprietary technological information.<sup>81</sup> Though the United States' Pivot to the Pacific can be viewed as contentious by China, it also presents numerous opportunities for coexistence and benefits through shared interests.

## Policy and National Strategy

### The Pivot to the Pacific

The national strategy articulated in 2014 focused on rebalancing focus from The Middle East to other regions and regaining core competencies in a fiscally constrained environment. As previously described, national strategy synchronizes the elements of national power to retain influence in the context of national interests.<sup>82</sup> The National Security Council, chaired by the president, provides broad strategic guidance in line with policy goals. The Secretary of Defense, in

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<sup>79</sup> Jeremy Bender, "A New Chinese Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile Is Bad News for US Aircraft Carriers," *Business Insider*, October 21, 2015, accessed December 15, 2016, <http://www.businessinsider.com/chinas-growing-military-power-may-make-us-aircraft-carriers-obsolete-2015-10>.

<sup>80</sup> Oriana Pawlyk, "China Shows Off J-20 Stealth Jet for First Time," *Defense Tech*, November 1, 2016, accessed December 15, 2016, <http://defensetech.org/2016/11/01/china-shows-off-j-20-stealth-jet-first-time/?mobile=1>; Kris Osborn, "The U.S. Army's Big Guns Go to the South China Sea," *National Interest*, May 21, 2016, accessed December 15, 2016, <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/the-us-armys-big-guns-go-the-south-china-sea-16292>.

<sup>81</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2013), accessed December 15, 2016, [http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/2013\\_China\\_Report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/2013_China_Report_FINAL.pdf), 36.

<sup>82</sup> Everett Carl C. Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 26.

conjunction with the Joint Staff, provides refinement for implementation at the Combatant and Service Command level.<sup>83</sup> This section analyzes the Nation's strategy in 2014, identifying pertinent information relevant to the Pacific.

In 2011, President Obama announced the Pivot to the Pacific, a whole of government approach signaling a deliberate shift of focus from the Middle East to allies and markets towards Asia. This policy emphasized the Pacific as a central facet of the US economy, foreign policy, defense strategy, and economic interests.<sup>84</sup> Three key changes in policy characterize the US Pivot to the Pacific: an increase in defense focus in the region, inclusion of the Indian Ocean, and a more integrated whole of government approach.

First, President Obama described increased Department of Defense focus in the region with distributed presence, increasing responsiveness and flexibility.<sup>85</sup> Though the majority of the Department of Defense was experiencing significant spending cuts given the *Budget Control Act*, United States Pacific Command was not required to reduce spending.<sup>86</sup> Subsequent strategic guidance focused on continued engagement with existing treaty nations, and expanded relationships with emerging partners such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. Increases in military engagement would be the most prominent facet of the Pivot to the Pacific.

Next, the United States would expand its geographic vision of the region, including India and the Indian Ocean, in the Pacific dialogue. Intended to increase the prominence of India in regional trade, this action also significantly shifted the geo-strategic importance of the Straits of Malacca,

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<sup>83</sup> JP 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, II-2.

<sup>84</sup> Mark E. Manyin et al., "Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's 'Rebalancing' Toward Asia – March 28, 2012" Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, Accessed 6 December, 2016. <https://archive.org/details/R42448PivottothePacificTheObamaAdministrationsRebalancingTowardAsia-crs>, i.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 4.

the narrow strip of water between Malaysia and Indonesia.<sup>87</sup> China would perceive this vision as adversarial action given economic and geographic competition.<sup>88</sup>

Finally, the Pivot to the Pacific called for a more deliberate, whole of government approach, synchronizing the employment of US national power in the region. Economically, the United States pursued the Trans-Pacific Partnership, an economic institution focused on expanded trade between regional economic powers. Politically, the administration increased engagements with multi-national institutions such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Finally, the United States pursued a more deliberate approach to managing the nation's relationship with China.<sup>89</sup> In concert with expanded defense activity, these efforts created the context for upcoming strategic defense guidance.

## National Strategy

The 2014 National Security Strategy describes four broad, enduring national interests: security to the United States and its allies, economic prosperity, respect for universal values, and an international order prepared to meet future challenges.<sup>90</sup> These interests are interrelated and dependent on synchronized application of national power to progress towards a favorable environment. The National Security Strategy provided better guidance for the Pivot to the Pacific by directing increased relationships with allies and expanded activities with partners. The document describes "...a future of security and integration to all Asian nations..." where the United States assists to "...uphold and extend fundamental right and divinity to all of its people."<sup>91</sup> Based on these broad interests and policy direction, the Department of Defense provided refined guidance in

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<sup>87</sup> Mark E. Manyin et al., "Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's 'Rebalancing' Toward Asia – March 28, 2012," 5.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>90</sup> *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 17.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 42.

the form of primary missions of the military. Those most pertinent to this research are provide a stabilizing presence, deter and defeat aggression, and project power despite anti-access/area denial challenges.<sup>92</sup>

National strategy directed the military to provide a global stabilizing presence to reinforce existing international and regional structures.<sup>93</sup> To support this imperative efficiently, the force would be required to increase joint cooperation, coordination, and integration. The Army's response to this directive manifested in expansion of regionally aligned forces to each geographic commander. The Army described *regional alignment* as a method to contribute well-trained and responsive forces to each theater. These forces would provide a stabilizing presence primarily through military-to-military engagements throughout various areas of responsibilities.<sup>94</sup> Though available for contingency response, these forces would focus on Theater Security Cooperation Activities. One Brigade Combat Team from Fort Riley served as the first regionally aligned force in 2013, conducting operations in over 34 African nations.<sup>95</sup>

Additionally, national strategy directed the military to deter and defeat aggression; guidance focused on regaining core competencies required to fight and win against a near-peer competitor. As the United States' Military focused on counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the skills required to excel in such an environment atrophied. To maintain dominance in the future, the force would be required to "...regain our proficiency to conduct forcible entry and large-scale combined arms maneuver operations against larger and more capable adversaries than we have confronted over the past decade."<sup>96</sup> This cognitive shift would require substantial training and

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<sup>92</sup> *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 5.

<sup>93</sup> *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 12.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>95</sup> *2014 Army Posture Statement* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 4.

<sup>96</sup> *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, 36.

education. To address the gap, the United States Army announced increased training rotations at the National Training Center with an updated *decisive action training environment*, where Brigade Combat Teams oppose a near-peer competitor in a complex scenario. Other variables in the environment include criminal actors, civilians, non-governmental organizations, and host-nation forces.<sup>97</sup>

The presence of a more balanced military capability would also serve as a deterrent to potential adversaries. The Defense Strategic Guidance describes credible deterrence as possessing "...the capability to deny an aggressor the prospect of achieving his objectives..."<sup>98</sup> In this context, deterrence is about not only a balanced force, but an adversary's perception of capability, intent, and likelihood of response.<sup>99</sup> The United States Military used forward deployed and regionally aligned forces to shape adversary perception prior to conflict.

To retain relevant deterrence, the United States Military would be required to address asymmetric threats developed by near-peer competitors. Near-peer competitors, as well as non-state actors, seek to deny United States' power projection through employment of anti-access, area-denial tactics, and technology.<sup>100</sup> Thus, national strategy directed that the joint force mitigate emergent anti-access, area-denial threats and retain potential access to contested spaces.<sup>101</sup> The Army responded to this imperative by directing an efficient and comprehensive modernization strategy to project land power into contested spaces. The Army developed methods to employ existing technology in innovative ways. Assured access would be one of the causes for the creation of multi-domain battle. Given the inclusion of India and the Indian Ocean to the geopolitical discussion

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<sup>97</sup> 2014 Army Posture Statement, 6.

<sup>98</sup> *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, 4.

<sup>99</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 32.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

elevated the importance of the Straits of Malacca as a bridge between two oceans.<sup>102</sup> Protecting this global commons would require access and expanded relationships with Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia.

However, requirements for a more capable and versatile military were presented alongside directives to draw down, restructure, and drastically reduce spending.<sup>103</sup> These constraints provided a shock to the military system as resources were previously abundant at the peak of the Global War on Terror. To enable this reduction in resources, senior leaders stressed the importance of efficiency in all action.<sup>104</sup> The Army described efficiency as *operational adaptability*, where organizations use minimal resources to produce the highest level of readiness.<sup>105</sup> *Organizational readiness*, another key concept, describes an organization's ability to deploy and accomplish an assigned mission. Units determine their readiness by assessing completion of mission essential tasks at echelon. Each Army organization has a mission essential task list with associated individual and collective tasks. To sustain readiness, Army units must maintain certification at the highest possible level without undue expenditure of resources.<sup>106</sup> The Army focused on combined arms maneuver in a decisive action training environment. Given constraints, this training would have to be sufficient to prepare units for regional employment in support of Geographic Combatant Commanders. Reciprocally, regionally aligned missions would have to provide training value to the force in the form of sustained readiness. Scarcity of resources is a constant in military planning where there is seldom enough time, money, or people to accomplish the mission without assuming risk.

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<sup>102</sup> Manyin, "Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's 'Rebalancing' Toward Asia," 5.

<sup>103</sup> *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, 29.

<sup>104</sup> *2014 Army Posture Statement*, 6.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>106</sup> Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-2.

## Military Strategy

Though national strategy developed by the National Security Counsel and the Department of Defense provides ends to synchronize employment of the elements of national power, it requires further refinement to become tangible for operational employment. As previously described, military strategy synchronizes all military means given the aims established in national strategy. In this context, United States Pacific Command created complementary military strategy with emphasis on implications in the Pacific Theater. Returning to the previous description of military strategy, theater strategy cannot be employed without preparing the means, or military organizations, for employment. United States Army Forces Command, or FORSCOM, creates this portion of military strategy. In 2014, disparity in guidance would lead to tension between the operational employment of regionally aligned forces and their training in a decisive action environment. A resource-constrained environment overshadowed national strategic guidance and accentuated this tension.

In 2014, FORSCOM focused efforts on rebalancing Army competencies from counterinsurgency to combined arms maneuver based on the national strategic imperative to deter and defeat aggression. As the Department of the Army had already announced increased Combat Training Center rotations, FORSCOM would be responsible for holistic preparatory home-station training in a resource constrained environment. FORSCOM *Command Training Guidance*, or *CTG*, is the Army's central authoritative document for home-station training priorities. This document directs training imperatives and certification requirements. In 2014, FORSCOM presented seven training imperatives with no clear delineation of priority. Later, in Supplement 1 to the CTG, FORSCOM would provide priorities and additional information regarding operational employment in support of regional alignment. Published in November of 2013, this untimely guidance would not

be of significant value for tactical units conducting regionally aligned missions in the next fiscal year. Training imperatives in the CTG focused on combined-arms maneuver training in a fiscally constrained environment.

To prepare forces for decisive action, FORSCOM focused guidance on success in *Unified Land Operations* through employment of combined-arms maneuver.<sup>107</sup> To gain proficiency in this core competency, the CTG directed tactical units to qualify maneuver companies at home station through live fire exercises. To gain this qualification, companies were required to complete a litany of explicit and implicit tasks to include weapons qualifications, subordinate squad and platoon live fire exercises, and numerous situational training exercises.<sup>108</sup> Each qualification would remain valid for 9 months or less dependent on turnover of leaders and personnel. To train tactical staffs, the CTG directed command post exercises when possible without formally directing frequency.<sup>109</sup> The CTG defined *operational adaptability* as the ability to synthesize combined-arms maneuver and mission command training, where leaders employed the philosophy to make decisions in ambiguous environment while opposed by a fictitious near-peer adversary.<sup>110</sup>

The FORSCOM CTG vaguely described a fiscally constrained environment in the context of *optimizing resources*.<sup>111</sup> In this section of the guidance, FORSCOM broadly described management of resources to reduce cost. The document directly named various classes of supply to include fuel (class III) and repair parts (class IX) as resources that the force would be required to manage diligently to meet readiness standards.<sup>112</sup> Funding for these classes of supply and other training resources are broadly categorized as *operations tempo*, or OPTEMPO, expenditures. The

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<sup>107</sup> 2014 *Command Training Guidance* (Fort Bragg: United States Army Forces Command, 2014), 3.

<sup>108</sup> Training Circular (TC) 3-20.0, *Integrated Weapons Training Strategy* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Officer, 2015), 1-4.

<sup>109</sup> 2014 *Command Training Guidance*, 8.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

CTG did not describe the prioritization of OPTEMPO expenditures between FORSCOM training, training in support of regional aligned mission, or training cost during execution of operational employment.

Though regional alignment existed as described in the Army Posture Statement, the FORSCOM CTG did not clarify training requirements in support of operational employment or priorities in training.<sup>113</sup> The CTG described regional alignment and readiness, where "...Decisive Action readiness establishes the baseline readiness requirement, regionally aligned units will also focus on regional alignment training requirements concurrently - this requires a complementary training approach."<sup>114</sup> In a fiscally constrained environment, it would rapidly become a challenge to accomplish all assigned training in preparation for decisive action and regional alignment. Though FORSCOM provided additional guidance in November of 2013, it was too late for employment into short-term training plans. This document, Supplement 1 to the Command Training Guidance, FORSCOM provided priorities to focus subordinate unit effort. The first of these priorities, *provide ready and responsive forces*, included regional aligned forces, where FORSCOM meets "...the full range of CCMD requirements with tailored, scalable and regionally engaged forces."<sup>115</sup> The supplement also provided regionally aligned force pre-deployment training imperatives. Though effectively articulated in Supplement 1, these priorities would not be relevant in preparation for regionally aligned mission in 2014.<sup>116</sup>

#### United States Pacific Command Theater Strategy

As FORSCOM's portion of military strategy reinforced the priority of combined arms maneuver, USPACOM aligned objectives to support national interests in the theater. USPACOM's

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<sup>113</sup> 2013 Army Posture Statement (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 4.

<sup>114</sup> 2014 Command Training Guidance, 6.

<sup>115</sup> Supplement 1 to 2014 Command Training Guidance (Fort Bragg: United States Army Forces Command, 2014), 3.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 3.

theater strategy sought to enhance regional security, provide deterrence to potential aggressors, and set conditions for response be across the area of responsibility should deterrence failed.<sup>117</sup> The strategy focused on employment of increased means through three lines of effort: strengthen alliances, enhance combat power, and uphold international order.<sup>118</sup> Each action would emphasize relationships, presence, and communication while focusing on a simple end state; "...pursuit of a stable, secure, and prosperous Asia-Pacific region."<sup>119</sup>

To strengthen alliances and partnerships, USPACOM emphasized support for existing relationships within the Pacific theater. This included relationships with five treaty allies: Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand.<sup>120</sup> In strategic guidance, strengthening alliances would be USPACOM's top priority given treaty nations' role in the theater strategy.<sup>121</sup> USPACOM would also stress the necessity of increasing relationships with regional partners to include India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Given India's prominence in the Pivot to the Pacific, USPACOM stressed the importance of this budding relationship. USPACOM described expanded commitment to India as a security partner in the region. To forge stronger partnerships, USPACOM would increase military engagements to "...build partner readiness, address security shortfalls, and address those [relationships] most vital to regional stability."<sup>122</sup>

Next, USPACOM's strategy accentuated the importance of enhancing credible military power and its role as a deterrent in the theater. USPACOM defined readiness as the ability to deter aggression; this readiness would be evaluated against the ability to execute operational and

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<sup>117</sup> "USPACOM Strategy and Theater Campaign Plan" (presentation, Camp Smith, HI, December, 2016), 26.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>120</sup> Samuel J. Locklear III, PACOM before the House Appropriations Committee, March 18, 2015, accessed December 15, 2016, <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/Speeches-Testimony/Article/581146/pacom-before-the-house-appropriations-committee-remarks/>.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

contingency plans.<sup>123</sup> USPACOM stressed the importance of forward-deployed and ready forces who could accomplish a diverse mission set. This forward-deployment is an essential component of the strategy given expansive distances inherent to the Pacific theater.<sup>124</sup> Though initially employed in support of theater security cooperation efforts, training with partners and allies, forces would be prepared to transition in support of a crisis or contingency.<sup>125</sup> This agility would bolster USPACOM's options to respond, thereby increasing deterrence if effectively communicated to allies and potential adversaries.<sup>126</sup>

Finally, USPACOM focused efforts on upholding the standing international order. To accomplish these objectives, USPACOM would participate in unprecedented efforts to communicate and cooperate with China's military forces. USPACOM would become one of the nation's top engagement platforms, articulating intent and attempting to reduce misunderstanding and confusion in a complex and contested region.<sup>127</sup> To increase the dialogue, USPACOM focused on shared interests between the two militaries including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and counter-piracy. This military strategy would require tactical organizations to address a number of challenges in the theater through sustained engagement with partners and allies.

## Pacific Pathways 2014

In 2013, United States Army Pacific (USARPAC) initiated a major transition to support the Pivot to the Pacific. After years of inattention, the Army Service Component Command, or ASCC, would emerge as a key contributor to national strategy. The commanding general of USARPAC, then Lieutenant General Vincent Brooks, envisioned the Pivot to the Pacific as a

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<sup>123</sup> Locklear, PACOM before the House Appropriations Committee.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

vehicle to change how the Army shaped an operational environment outside of conflict.<sup>128</sup> Under Brooks' leadership, USARPAC, and subordinate headquarters would support strategic objectives through the synchronized employment of regionally aligned and assigned forces.

In 2013, the Army announced major steps to support the Pivot to the Pacific. First, the Army elevated United States Army Pacific Command from a 3 to 4-star headquarters, expanding the role and responsibility in support of the United States Pacific Commanding General.<sup>129</sup> Next, the Army formally aligned numerous forces to USPACOM including I Corps, 25th Infantry Division, 593rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command, four Stryker Brigade Combat Teams, two Infantry Brigade Combat Teams, and a wide variety of other enabling units totaling over 80,000 Soldiers.<sup>130</sup>

General Brooks envisioned a new operational construct to support national and military strategy in the Pacific. Branded Pacific Pathways, the initiative linked multiple existing theater cooperation activities together, streamlining execution with a common set of equipment and troops. This efficient approach satisfied multiple strategic objectives, providing the FORSCOM commanding general with forward-deployed land forces and reducing cost to existing activities. Brooks believed that the Army was wasting readiness by training to the highest possible level but not employing the readiness created outside of a conflict.<sup>131</sup> Brooks saw the initiative as an opportunity to set the theater, placing the right "...assets-people, equipment, infrastructure and the right agreements-in the right place at the right time."<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> General Vincent K. Brooks, "U.S. Army Pacific and the Pacific Rebalance," *Army* October 2013, 124.

<sup>129</sup> *2014 Army Posture Statement*, 4.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>131</sup> General Vincent K. Brooks and Charlie H. Hall, "U.S. Army Pacific Makes Major Moves to Face Regional Challenges," *Army* April 2014, 36.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

Brooks described the project as innovation, where Army forces could experiment with employment across the theater.<sup>133</sup> He focused his staff on *the three Rs*: reconnaissance, relationships, and rehearsal. First, the initiative allowed land forces to gain a better understanding of the physical terrain and key infrastructure in the theater through reconnaissance during operations. Next, the initiative allowed for expanded relationships with land forces in multiple countries, setting conditions for future regional cooperation. Finally, Pacific Pathways served as a rehearsal, with each tactical unit experiencing the challenge of entering, conducting operations, and departing numerous countries in sequence.<sup>134</sup> Brooks directed his staff and subordinate headquarters to develop a rapid proof of principle, with execution set for the summer of 2014. After this proof of principle, USARPAC expanded to three Pacific Pathways iterations a year starting in 2015.

Pacific Pathways 2014 effectively deployed 669 Soldiers, 23 Stryker vehicles, and 11 helicopters to the Pacific theater from late August to November of 2014. The majority of the task force deployed from 2-2 Stryker brigade combat team, stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. The operation linked three existing exercises as its core: Garuda Shield in Indonesia, Keris Strike in Malaysia, and Orient Shield in Japan.<sup>135</sup> During Pacific Pathways 2014 the unit's equipment travelled from location to location via a contracted civilian vessel as the Soldiers travelled via chartered civilian aircraft. In each country, Soldiers participated in military-to-military exercises in partnership with host nation forces. In Indonesia, forces focused on jungle operations and a company level combined live fire. In Malaysia, the units participated in urban focused training and a partnered command post exercise. In Japan, partnered forces focused on mounted maneuver.

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<sup>133</sup> *CALL Interview with GEN Vincent K. Brooks, CG USARPAC* (Indonesia: Center for Army Lessons Learned, 2014).

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>135</sup> Louis Zeisman, "Pacific Pathways '14" (AUSA Panel Comments, Japan, October, 2014).

Further analysis in the context of the military strategy highlights the initiative's key contributions and shortfalls.

USPACOM's first line of effort, strengthen alliances and partnerships, emphasized enhanced relationships with allies and partners. Pacific Pathways strengthened the land forces of three partnered nations through training and engagement. As an example, partnered forces in Malaysia conducted search and rescue training, contributing to the Malaysia Army's humanitarian assistance capacity.<sup>136</sup> In Indonesia, forces conducted a large-scale combined-arms live fire. Amongst other benefits, this training provided the Indonesian Army, or *Tentara Nasional Indonesia-Angkatan Darat*, exposure to the professionalism of non-commissioned officers. Having just completed a rotation at the National Training Center, Soldiers from 2-2 SBCT were at the highest possible level of training readiness. Pacific Pathways 2014 positively influenced relationships with two partnered and one allied nation given extended exposure and professional training and exchanges.

USPACOM's second line of effort, enhancing credible combat power, described the importance of military power as a deterrent in theater. Pacific Pathways supported this line of effort by initiating Army actions to set the theater as envisioned by General Brooks. Though Pacific Pathways focused on tactical, brigade level operations, it required support from a multitude of headquarters at echelon for effective and continued action. To sustain the force, USARPAC relied on support from multiple organizations to include 593rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command and 8th Theater Sustainment Command. For command and control, USARPAC relied on 25th Infantry Division, I Corps, and United States Army Japan. In addition, Pacific Pathways demonstrated the effectiveness of specialized Army sustainment, one of the Army's key contributions to any joint endeavor.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> "Pacific Pathways Update Brief" (presentation, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA, April, 2014).

<sup>137</sup> Thomas J. Bickford et al., "The Role of the U.S. Army in Asia," CNA China Studies May, 2015, 29.

Though effective in many regards, Pacific Pathways lacked true joint integration or demonstration of tactical self-sustainment. Though Pacific Pathway 2014 set conditions for expanded joint operations within the theater, little interaction occurred. The military did not possess the capability to provide a joint common operating picture, sharing understanding of unit locations at the tactical level. This understanding will be required to operationalize the concept of Multi-Domain Battle. In addition, the task force did not possess the capacity to operate independently from contracted support. Though the Pacific Pathway 2014 task force could be perceived as a tactical option for the USPACOM Commanding General to employ in the event of a regional catastrophe, the task force did not possess the capability to function in such an environment. Given cost constraints regarding vessel size, the task force was limited to equipment required for exercise participation. The task force did not ship adequate equipment to move without contracted transportation equipment, or self-sustain without contracted life support.<sup>138</sup>

In the context of FORSCOM's military strategic imperatives, Pacific Pathways 2014 served as an effective method to train tactical staffs at low cost. The FORSCOM training guidance directed organizations to use every available opportunity to train their command post.<sup>139</sup> While focused on exercise objectives, Pacific Pathways 2014 proved to be extremely challenging and beneficial for the brigade headquarters and two subordinate battalion staffs. Each country required the staffs to rehearse deployment, reception, staging, onward movement and integration, and redeployment activities. Additionally, the brigade headquarters maintained a common operating picture of all assigned and attached Soldiers and equipment, often operating in five or more locations spread across the theater. These experiences in mission command and deployment activities were significantly beneficial to Pacific Pathways 2014 participants.

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<sup>138</sup> "Pacific Pathways '14 AAR" (presentation, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA, October, 2014).

<sup>139</sup> *2014 Command Training Guidance*, 8.

However, Pacific Pathways 2014 did not directly address FORSCOM's directive to focus on Unified Land Operations through combined-arms maneuver.<sup>140</sup> Prior to Pacific Pathways 2014, each battalion certified through a combined-arms live fire at the National Training Center several weeks before departure. To sustain readiness would require completion of numerous supporting task to include leader certifications, Stryker gunnery, and maneuver training in the form of situational training exercises. Finally, each organization would be required to complete a combined-arms live fire, the certifying event for Army maneuver forces, within nine months of the previous certification.<sup>141</sup> At the highest echelon of collective training, one Pacific Pathways company completed a combined arms live fire in Indonesia. However, none of the organizations involved completed the required supporting tasks. Given this gap in training, certification was not renewed, requiring a complete retraining in the following fiscal year. Had operational planners understood the constrained context of national and military strategy, they could have better integrated training objectives to sustain organizational readiness. Though Pacific Pathways 2014 contributed to readiness in the context of mission command and deployment activities, it expended readiness associated with Army maneuver forces at the platoon, company, and battalion level.

## Conclusion

There are countless lessons that military planners can draw from Pacific Pathways 2014, United States Army Pacific's operational construct to support national and military strategy. First, Pacific Pathways itself demonstrates the concept of emergent strategy. In complexity theory, emergent strategy is realization of unforeseen attributes, characteristics, or actions.<sup>142</sup> Pacific Pathways represents a facet of emergent strategy, where ready forces are regionally aligned and active in theaters around the world. The philosophy of mission command enables emergent strategy

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<sup>140</sup> 2014 *Command Training Guidance*, 3.

<sup>141</sup> TC 3-20.0, 1-4.

<sup>142</sup> Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 119.

where commanders build shared understanding to foster disciplined initiative by subordinate leaders.<sup>143</sup> General Brooks built shared understanding and fostered an environment of mutual trust in experimentation. In this model, operational art occurred at numerous levels as operational planners gained understanding of the strategic context and contributed to the initiative based on the commander's intent.

In many ways, Pacific Pathways 2014 failed to address FORSCOM's focus on Unified Land Operations through combined-arms maneuver. This emphasis directly supports national strategy through enhancing the force as a credible deterrent against a near-peer competitor. During execution, tactical units failed to sustain readiness at the battalion, company, and in some instances even the platoon level. In this context, FORSCOM paid for a Brigade Combat Team's Readiness, gave it to a Combatant Commander for employment, and in return received an untrained unit. To add value to this effort, operational planners should have increased efforts to the readiness FORSCOM purchased prior to Pacific Pathways 2014. Tactical units could have focused on some supporting tasks with no degradation to activities with host-nation forces such as weapons qualification and small unit live fire training. Such action would also decrease future training cost to FORSCOM, addressing Department of Defense directives to maximize resources.<sup>144</sup>

Additionally, Pacific Pathways 2014 did little to enhance joint cooperation and coordination in the Pacific theater, another action that would enhance the responsiveness of the joint force as a collective team. The Pacific Pathways task force had no contact with other US tactical forces in theater during execution and there was no effort to gain situational awareness of regional joint activities. Further, the task force had no actual potential for response in support of contingency, a directive echoed in the USPACOM commander's strategy. Given constraints in movement cost, the

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<sup>143</sup> ADRP 6-0, 2-4.

<sup>144</sup> 2014 Command Training Guidance, 7.

task force did not possess the infrastructure to self-move or sustain when detached from contract support.

These gaps in support to strategic objective directly relate to gaps in operational planning. We should now ask what is the root cause of this failure? Enter the “art” in operational art. Art is quite simply the "skill acquired by experience, study, or observation."<sup>145</sup> Just as art is an essential component of military planning, scarcity is an ever-present facet of the planning environment. There are always too many task and objectives without enough time and resources. Therefore, art is required to allocated resources and make risk decisions. Operational art does not occur in a sterile environment where cause and effect are easily forecast and relationships are easy to observe. Operational art occurs in an inherently complex environment.

This study presents several key themes that should resonate to any military planner. First is the notion of complexity, where the fog and friction of the environment cloud relationships between cause and effect. This study provides countless examples of complexity including the environment in the Pacific theater, the future of that environment, and the competing requirement within national and military strategy. Planners employ operational art to distill complexity into achievable tactical actions. This study demonstrated the necessity for operational art at numerous levels including FORSCOM, USPACOM, and USARPAC. Finally, this study demonstrated the importance of recognizing emergent principles. By creating shared language and understanding, operational art provides subordinate organizations the latitude to think creatively and solve problems. USPACOM’s theater strategy created the cognitive space for USARPAC to plan and creatively address challenges in the environment. In turn, USARPAC created Pacific Pathways as an operational construct. This construct became a preeminent facet of theater strategy once realized.

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<sup>145</sup> Merriam-Webster “Definition of Art,” Merriam-Webster, accessed September 27, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/art>.

Though presented through the lens of operational planning in the Pacific theater, these lessons apply to any planner facing a complex problem set.

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